

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

Incidence and Nature of Child Labor

Statistics on the number of working children under age 15 in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are unavailable.⁴⁰⁹⁷ However, some children work on family-owned banana farms, mainly during harvest time, or in family-owned cottage industries.⁴⁰⁹⁸ Children are also reportedly involved in commercial sexual exploitation, including boys and street children.⁴⁰⁹⁹

Education at government primary schools is free. Although education at these schools is free, other costs of school attendance must be borne by parents, such as the cost of textbooks, food, and transportation. These costs present an obstacle to poor families and contribute to children's non-attendance.⁴¹⁰⁰ Whether or not education is compulsory is unclear. In 2004, the Ministry of Education reported that there were no regulations for compulsory education.⁴¹⁰¹ However, the 1992 Education Act provides for compulsory primary education.⁴¹⁰² In 2002, the gross primary enrollment rate was 107 percent, and the net primary enrollment rate was 90 percent.⁴¹⁰³ Gross and net enrollment ratios are based on the number of students formally registered in primary school and therefore do not necessarily reflect actual school attendance. As of 2001, 85 percent of children who started primary school were likely to reach grade five.⁴¹⁰⁴ Government school-feeding and textbook loan programs substantially contribute to improving the participation rate of children at the primary level.⁴¹⁰⁵ However, there is a decrease in enrollment into secondary schools as a result of a mandatory entrance exam.⁴¹⁰⁶

Child Labor Laws and Enforcement

The Employment of Women, Young Persons, and Children's Act prohibits the employment of persons under 14 years of age in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.⁴¹⁰⁷ Section 8 of the Act does however permit

⁴⁰⁹⁷ This statistic is not available from the data sources that are used in this report. Please see the "Data Sources and Definitions" section for information about sources used. Reliable data on the worst forms of child labor are especially difficult to collect given the often hidden or illegal nature of the worst forms, such as the use of children in the illegal drug trade, prostitution, pornography, and trafficking. As a result, statistics and information on children's work in general are reported in this section. Such statistics and information may or may not include the worst forms of child labor. For more information on the definition of working children and other indicators used in this report, please see the "Data Sources and Definitions" section.

⁴⁰⁹⁸ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices- 2004: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Washington, D.C., February 28, 2005; available from <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2004/41774.htm>.

⁴⁰⁹⁹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Concluding Observations*, CRC/C/15/Add.184, UN, Geneva, June 13, 2002, para. 48; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/\(Symbol\)/d40d2e0630491d59c1256bd6004a471f?OpenDocument](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/(Symbol)/d40d2e0630491d59c1256bd6004a471f?OpenDocument).

⁴¹⁰⁰ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 of the Convention: Initial Reports of States Parties*, CRC/C/28/Add.18, UN, Geneva, October 10, 2001, para. 17; available from [http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/233cbd03c45af4fec1256b490053e099/\\$FILE/G0145063.pdf](http://www.unhchr.ch/tbs/doc.nsf/898586b1dc7b4043c1256a450044f331/233cbd03c45af4fec1256b490053e099/$FILE/G0145063.pdf). UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para. 305, 313, and 350.

⁴¹⁰¹ Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, *Written correspondence*, information submitted in response to U.S. government inquiry, Kingstown, September 13, 2004.

⁴¹⁰² UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*.

⁴¹⁰³ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, <http://stats.uis.unesco.org/TableViewer/tableView.aspx?ReportId=51> (Gross and Net Enrollment Ratios, Primary; accessed December 2005).

⁴¹⁰⁴ The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), *The State of the World's Children 2005: Childhood Under Threat*, New York, 2004.

⁴¹⁰⁵ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*, para. 350.

⁴¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, para. 318-322.

⁴¹⁰⁷ Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, *Written correspondence*.

children under 14 to help their parents or guardians with light agricultural or horticultural work on family land, but only during hours when they are not in school.⁴¹⁰⁸ Children often leave school at the age of 15 and many begin to work as apprentices at that age.⁴¹⁰⁹ Any person who employs a child in an industrial undertaking is liable to a USD 100 fine for their first offense, and a USD 250 fine for each subsequent offense.⁴¹¹⁰ Use of children for night work is also prohibited.⁴¹¹¹

The Labor Inspectorate at the Department of Labor receives and investigates child labor complaints and conducts annual workplace inspections.⁴¹¹² According to the U.S. Department of State, employers are believed to generally respect the law in practice.⁴¹¹³

The worst forms of child labor may be prosecuted under different statutes in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines. Forced or compulsory labor is prohibited by the Constitution, and it is not known to occur.⁴¹¹⁴ Furthermore, the minimum age for enrollment in the Saint Vincent and the Grenadines security force is 18 or 19.⁴¹¹⁵ There are no laws that specifically address trafficking in persons, but there are various provisions that could be applied to trafficking in the country's Penal Code.⁴¹¹⁶ Causing or encouraging prostitution of girls under the age of 15 is prohibited by the Penal Code and is punishable with imprisonment for up to 7 years.⁴¹¹⁷ It is also illegal to have intercourse with a girl under the age of 15 years.⁴¹¹⁸ Kidnapping and abduction with the intent to take the person out of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines are offenses punishable with up to 14 years of imprisonment.⁴¹¹⁹

Current Government Policies and Programs to Eliminate the Worst Forms of Child Labor

As of 2005, the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has implemented a number of efforts to prevent children from poor economic backgrounds from engaging in child labor. The ministry co-sponsors the Children Against Poverty (CAP) Vocation Program, which provides training for children from nine schools in various skills. The ministry also provides financial assistance for the purchase of school uniforms and examination fees; accessible schools and libraries; counseling support mechanisms; and a special reading and parenting program.⁴¹²⁰

The Ministry of Education is also participating in the implementation of the OECS Education Strategy, through which the OECS territories aim to improve their education systems. The government is also

⁴¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁴¹⁰⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*.

⁴¹¹⁰ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *reporting*, September 2001.

⁴¹¹¹ The Protection Project, <http://www.protectionproject.org/vincent.doc> (2005 Human Rights Report on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines); accessed January 4, 2005).

⁴¹¹² U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*. See also U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *reporting*, September 2001.

⁴¹¹³ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *reporting*, September 2001.

⁴¹¹⁴ *Constitution of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*, Article 4; available from <http://www.georgetown.edu/pdba/Constitutions/Vincent/stvincent79.html>. See also U.S. Department of State, *Country Reports- 2004: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*.

⁴¹¹⁵ Coalition to End the Use of Child Soldiers, "Caribbean," in *Child Soldiers Global Report 2004*; available from http://www.child-soldiers.org/document_get.php?id=816.

⁴¹¹⁶ U.S. Embassy- Bridgetown, *reporting*, March 8 2005. See also Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, *Criminal Code of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines*; available from <http://209.190.246.239/protectionproject/statutesPDF/St.Vincent&GrenF.pdf>.

⁴¹¹⁷ Ibid., Article 130.

⁴¹¹⁸ Sexual intercourse with a girl under 13 years of age is punishable with imprisonment for life. Sexual intercourse with a girl above the age of 13 but below the age of 15 is punishable with imprisonment for up to 5 years. See Ibid., Articles 124 and 125.

⁴¹¹⁹ Ibid., Article 201.

⁴¹²⁰ Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, *Written correspondence*.

collaborating with UNICEF, UNESCO, and other organizations to improve the level of educational services.⁴¹²¹

The Government of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines is implementing the OECS Education Development Project funded by the World Bank to support the construction and rehabilitation of schools, train teachers and administrators to design and carry out school development plans, and strengthen key elements of the education system's management at the Ministry of Education level. The project also funds literacy training and peer mentoring programs, and trains guidance counselors and special education specialists.⁴¹²² The Caribbean Development Bank is also funding a Basic Education II project to improve the management of the school system.⁴¹²³

Selected Child Labor Measures Adopted by Governments		
Ratified Convention 138		
Ratified Convention 182	12/04/2001	✓
ILO-IPEC Member		
National Plan for Children		
National Child Labor Action Plan		
Sector Action Plan		

⁴¹²¹ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Initial Reports of States Parties*. para 311.

⁴¹²² The World Bank, *Project Appraisal Document on a Proposed Loan in the Amount of US\$3.1 Million and Credit in the Amount of SDR2.2 Million (US\$3.1 Million Equivalent) to the Government of St. Vincent and the Grenadines for an OECS Education Development Project in support of the Third Phase of the OECS Education Development Program*, May 27 2004; available from http://www-wds.worldbank.org/servlet/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2004/06/14/000012009_20040614170953/Rendered/PDF/290470OEC.pdf.

⁴¹²³ Caribbean Development Bank, *Pipeline Projects*, Caribbean Development Bank, [online] n.d. 2004 [cited August 11, 2004]; available from <http://www.caribank.org>.